

November 12, 1913.

In re Investigation of Accident on the New York,  
Chicago & St. Louis Railroad near Fairview,  
Pa., on October 3, 1913.

On October 3, 1913, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad near Fairview, Pa., resulting in the death of two employees and the injury of one employee.

After investigation of this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

At the place where this accident occurred the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad is a single track line running east and west and operated by the train order system. The collision occurred on straight track on a fill of about 15 feet and on a slight grade descending eastward. The trains involved in this collision were third class westbound freight train first No. 45, consisting of 2 engines, 79 empty cars, and a caboose, with Conductor Wott and Enginemen Norden and Hale in charge, and second class eastbound freight train first No. 54, consisting of a locomotive, 32 loaded cars, and a caboose, with Conductor Densee and Engineman Todd in charge.

On the date of the accident first No. 45 left Tift yard, Buffalo, at 11:45 a. m.; at 8:55 p. m. this train arrived at Cascade, Pa., 9.7 miles east of Fairview Pit, where the passing track is located. At Cascade the crew in charge of this train received 19 order No. 116 reading as follows:

1st & 2nd No. 54 Engines 442 & 423 will wait at Girard until nine thirty 9:30 p.m. Fairview Pit nine forty 9:40 p.m., Swanville nine fifty 9:50 p.m. for 1st No. 45 Engines 440 & 420 double head.

First No. 45 left Cascade at 9:01 p. m., having under this order 39 minutes to reach Fairview. This train stopped just east of the east switch at Fairview Pit at 9:28 p. m. In attempting to start the train after the switch had been opened for the purpose of entering the passing track the train was broken in two and a draw bar was pulled out on the east end of the fifteenth car from the head of the train. Before the train could be placed on the passing track it was then necessary to set out the disabled car which would cause some delay, and the head brakeman was sent out for the purpose of flagging first No. 54; he started out at about 9:31 p.m., carrying one red and one white lantern, one torpedo being attached to the red lantern.

The head portion of first No. 45 then pulled up into the passing track and set out the disabled car on a spur leading off from the passing track near the west end. The engines with the other cars then returned to the rear portion of the train on the main track east of the east passing track switch. The train was again coupled up and the air brake train line had just been recharged when first No. 45 was struck by first No. 54.

First No. 54 left Conneaut, O., at 8:35 p. m., and arrived at Wallace Junction, 2.3 miles west of Fairview Pit at 9:32 p. m., the crew there receiving copies of train order No. 116. This train left Wallace Junction at 9:42 p. m., passed the flagman of first No. 45, who stood near the west passing track switch at Fairview Pit, passed the switch at the east end of the passing track which was set for the side track and displayed a red signal for this train, and struck first No. 45, which was standing about 600 feet east of the east passing track switch, the speed of first No. 54 at that time being approximately 30 miles per hour.

Engineman Todd of first No. 54 stated that at Wallace Junction he received a copy of order No. 116, requiring his train to wait at Fairview Pit until 9:40 for the first No. 45. He stated that as his train approached Fairview Pit he noticed that train No. 45 was not on the passing track; he could see some distance ahead and did not see first No. 45. He stated that he then closed the front cab window, placed a lantern between his knees, and read his orders. He was doing this while passing the west switch at Fairview Pit. He stated that he then looked out of the window and saw that nothing was in sight on the siding. As order No. 116 required his train to wait at that point only until 9:40 and it was then nearly 9:50 the time was up and he assumed that first No. 45 had not attempted to reach Fairview Pit to meet his train. He then handed the orders over to the fireman. He said that about the time he passed the west switch he leaned out of the window and looked ahead, but his attention was not directed ahead continuously as he was reading the orders. He thought at that time that the head brakeman and fireman was looking ahead. He did not see the flagman of 1st No. 45, nor the red switch light at the east end of the passing track. When he handed the orders to the fireman his train had nearly reached the east end of the passing track. He then looked out and saw train No. 45 only 10 or 15 car lengths away. He estimated the speed of his train at 25 or 30 miles an hour, and he did not have time to do anything to prevent the collision or to jump off from his engine.

The fireman and the head brakeman of first No. 54 were killed in the collision. Conductor Danner and Brakeman Northrop and Yeocott were riding in the caboose when the

collision occurred. When this train reached Fairview Pit the time which order No. 118 required it to wait for first No. 45 had expired. As the rear end of the train passed the west passing track switch the brakemen who were riding in the cupola heard a man whistle and saw the flagman of first No. 45 on the passing track waving his lantern, but none of the men in the caboose suspected any danger and no attempt was made to stop the train. The conductor stated that shortly afterwards the brakes were applied and the collision occurred. Conductor Dennee stated that he had talked with Engineman Todd about this accident, and Engineman Todd stated that he did not see the flagman nor the switch light at the east end of the passing track; the first intimation of danger that he had was when he saw the headlight and the classification signals on first No. 45.

Engineman Morden of the leading engine on train first No. 45 stated that after the draw bar had been pulled out, realizing that his train would be delayed in taking the siding, he sent the fireman out with a red lantern directing him to give it to the head brakeman, who immediately started out to flag first No. 54. He saw the flagman walking westward on the track; the last time he saw the flagman he thought that he had nearly reached the west switch. He heard and saw train No. 54 approaching, but expected that train to stop and let his train enter the passing track, although he did not hear that train answer the flagman's signal. As train first No. 54 approached he was looking back to where his train was being coupled up; he had started to call in his flagman but seeing the trainmen giving violent signals he looked ahead and saw ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ first No. 54 only about two car lengths away. He did not have time to get off from the engine before the collision occurred.

Engineman Hale of the second engine of first No. 45 stated that the last time he saw the flagman when he had gone out to flag first No. 54 he was near the west switch. He saw train No. 54 approaching at a high rate of speed, and just before the collision occurred he jumped off from his engine. He thought that the engine of first No. 54 was working steam when the collision occurred. He noticed that the switch light at the east end of the passing track was burning, displaying a red light.

Head Brakeman Henretta of first No. 45 stated that after his train stopped just east of the east passing track switch at Fairview Pit he ran ahead and opened the switch. Shortly afterwards the fireman came toward him carrying a red light; he ran back and got the red light and then ran up the main track for the purpose of flagging first No. 54. He stated that he had the red light and white light and one torpedo which was attached to the red lantern. He went west

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to a point he estimated to be two car lengths from the west switch and he stood at that point when first No. 54 approached. He saw that train some distance away, and swung his lantern back and forth across the track. When the train approached, however, no attention was paid to his signal; he did not place the torpedo on the rail, but as the engine passed him he whistled and hollered in an attempt to attract the engineman's attention. The cab window was closed, however, and no one was in sight. When the caboose passed him he again hollered and whistled, and after the caboose passed he saw men come out on the rear platform carrying white lanterns, but they did not answer his signal.

The collision occurred approximately 600 feet east of the east passing track switch. The passing track is 3,456 feet in length. The flagman had nearly reached the west passing track switch when first No. 54 passed him; he was therefore nearly 4,000 feet from his train. Had his signals been observed and obeyed by the engineman of first No. 54 the collision would no doubt have been averted.

Had Engineman Todd been looking out he would have had a clear view of the switch light at the east end of the passing track for a distance of approximately 2,200 feet and of the engine of first No. 45 for a distance of approximately 2,600 feet. The weather was clear, the switch light and the headlights and classification lights on first No. 45 were burning, and had Engineman Todd been on the alert it is believed he could have foreseen the danger in time to avert the collision.

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Todd of first No. 54 to observe and obey the flagman's signal, as well as failure to observe the position of a switch and to heed the danger signal given by the switch light.

The flagging rule in force on this railroad does not require the use of torpedoes. At the time of this accident the weather was clear and the flagman did not apply a torpedo to the rail although he had one with him. He stated that he expected the engineer to see and acknowledge his signal and waited for him to do so until it was too late to use a torpedo. Had torpedoes been required and used in this case it is probable that the attention of Engineman Todd would have been attracted and the collision averted.

Engineman Todd had been employed by this railroad company since 1882; for three years he had been a fireman and for 29 years he had been an engineman. His record was good. At the time of the collision he had been on duty 2 hours, after a period off duty of 17 hours.